

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today met with LaQuita Grinnage, an 18-year-old from Milwaukee who is among five finalists currently competing in Washington, D.C. to become the Boys and Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year. Tomorrow morning, she will learn whether she is the winner, which would make her the representative of nearly 5 million boys and girls around the country who are involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. LaQuita has already been named the Midwest Region Youth of the Year.

As the regional winner, Grinnage will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship. If she wins the national competition, she will receive an additional \$15,000 college scholarship and will be installed by President Barack Obama during a ceremony in the Oval Office. LaQuita graduated from Alexander Hamilton High School last spring and is currently starting her first year at Tennessee State University, in Nashville.

"It all started when I was about 8-years-old," LaQuita said. She was placed in the Boys and Girls Club while her family was facing challenges. Since that time, she has been involved in the Davis Boys and Girls Club, the Mary Ryan Boys and Girls Club, and she is currently representing the all-girls Saint Joan Antida club.

Some of LaQuita's many accomplishments include volunteering at a children's hospital, mentoring at Green Bay School, volunteering at churches, and becoming a founding member of the Club's Sista Pride program, which teaches teen girls how to become responsible, mature and positive young women.

"I am so proud of LaQuita for all she has already accomplished in the face of terrible adversity," Congresswoman Moore said. "My observation, my experience, and LaQuita's story remind me that it truly takes a village to raise a child. The Boys and Girls Clubs of America and similar nonprofit organizations fill such a critical gap in our communities, especially in places like the city of Milwaukee where the public school system is lacking the resources to provide the social services we know can help kids succeed. The Boys and Girls Clubs are feeding people, babysitting, putting kids to work, keeping them safe from drugs, and tutoring them. They are a critical part of the safety net for Milwaukee's kids."

"The national competition consists of having a three-minute speech well memorized, and the judges rate you on communication, articulation, how well you get along with others, posture,

poise, your involvement in the clubs, community service projects within the Boys and Girls Clubs and outside of the Clubs, and academics,” LaQuita said, noting some of the qualifications that helped her become the Midwest Region Youth of the Year.

The last Midwest Region Youth of the Year winner from Milwaukee was Ronald Fancher of the Augusta M. LaVarnway Boys (& Girls) Club in 1976. The last National Youth of the Year winner from Milwaukee was Kenneth Ivory of the former Franklin Place Boys Club in 1975. Both young men met President Gerald Ford at the White House.

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